Synthesis

Chapter 2 of Fair Isn't Always Equal, Mastery, is all about how true knowledge results in mastery of the information. Mastery is the ability to use the information in a realistic application. Wormeli assures us that mastery cannot be assumed from one correctly done assessment, but instead from multiple assessments. In order to determine true mastery with our students we must give them multiple assessments. These assessments should test for the six facets of understanding: explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge. Once students have demonstrated each of these facets, a teacher can be reassured that they have fully mastered the information at hand. There are many different kinds of assessments other than tests and quizzes that can be used to test for mastery, including videos, CDs, Web sites, mind maps, discussions, essays, models, etc. As long as the assessment requires the student to use critical thinking with the subject matter, it can demonstrate mastery. It is important that the school has a consensus on what mastery is, that way students know what is expected of them and how to demonstrate their learning within all classrooms without confusion.

Abstract

As teachers, we will need to know how to identify mastery in each of our units. Wormeli encourages us to think of this through finishing sentences such as "mastery is..." and "understanding is like..." and making sure we stick to our guns when seeing if students have truly mastered the material. Other than doing multiple assessments, we keep good track of our students growth over time than we can in order to look for mastery, such as keeping learning contracts with the students or simply a journal where we document progress. Grades are not always a good indicator of mastery in a classroom. As Alison said, "It was a bit surprising how difficult this can be, and how often a teacher needs to check student progress to assure that they are well on the path of fully understanding whatever standard it is you have them working toward." A lot of students enjoyed the Benjamin Franklin quote, "The quote "Tim was so learned that he could name a horse in nine languages; so ignorant, that he bought a cow to ride on," registered with many students;" it is true that a lot of people are intelligent but not in a mastered way, and so they are not able to use the information to the best of their ability or in the right way.